163. Political disabilities of the various classes of people in Travancore and the means for removing them.

Mr. P. Jacob Kurien (Member, Nominated) thanked the Government once again for the announcement regarding the separation of Devaswoms from the Land Revenue Department and stated that the separation of the two Departments would remove a long-felt grievance suffered by the Christians and non-caste Hindus of the State in the matter of entertainment in the public service. He deplored the growing animosity between the several classes of His Highness' subjects and hoped that all the communities would work together harmoniously, in the interests of the welfare of the country. He also pointed out that the Hostels attached to His Highness the Maha Raja's Arts College and the Law College were confined to caste Hindus and prayed that they might be thrown open to all classes of His Highness' subjects.

Dewan's reply.—In regard to the public service, I have nothing to say in addition to what I have already stated. In regard to the Arts College Hostel, I may repeat that in the new hostel building which is under construction provision is being made for students belonging to all communities being admitted. In the existing hostel there is no such convenience. In regard to the Law College Hostel, your representation will receive my attention.

You say that there are signs of communal ill-feeling in the country. If there is any such ill-feeling, there are none here who deplore it more than the Government. But I do not really think that there is any deep-rooted communal ill-feeling here. During moments of excitement something might be said to create such an impression. But I sincerely hope that there is no real communal ill-feeling in the country and that nothing would be done by any one to create it or foster it.

164. Position of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly in the political constitution of Travancore: suggestions for improving it.

Mr. Idikkala Eappen (Member, Tiruvalla Taluk) began by observing that an impression had got abroad that the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly had lost its usefulness with the expansion of the Legislative Council and that it was because of such an impression in some quarters that he decided to bring up that subject for representation. He then referred to the revised draft rules of the Assembly published in the Gazette and made a few remarks. He disapproved of the provisions which (1) directed that more than one member should not deal with one and the same subject, (2) laid down that matters which could be disposed of by Heads of Departments should not be discussed at the Assembly, (3) invested the Dewan Peishkars with power to disallow subjects brought forward by any member, and (4) enabled the Dewan to depute another officer to preside over the session of the Assembly and stipulated that the subject brought up by a member should be one relating to the taluks which had returned him. He also objected to the rule which reduced the time-limit of the speeches of members from 15 to 10 minutes. He admitted that there were good provisions also such as those reducing the tax qualifications of voters from Rs. 50 to Rs. 5. He was for all adults being declared as voters, or at least those who paid any land tax, whatever its amount might be. He then averred that the preparation of the voters' list in the Tiruvalla taluk required to be attended to by higher officers. In conclusion, the Member deplored the present communal cleavage in the country which was assuming rather unhealthy proportions, and stated that unless prompt measures were devised to bring about a feeling of concord and harmony as between the several classes of His Highness' subjects, there would not only be no progress worth the name in the country, but the country itself would go to ruin.

Dewan's reply.—As regards the revision of the Assembly Rules, I have already said in reply to the previous speakers that Government keep a perfectly open mind. All your objections and suggestions will be very carefully considered.

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